



Welcome to Our First Issue - by Director Wagner

Dear CDSS Partner,

If there is one thing everyone working and advocating in state and local government in California can agree on, it's that over the past couple of years we have faced unprecedented challenges in our state. For many of us, these challenges have caused significantly painful decisions and unimaginable proposals to save resources.

Within this context and environment, improving channels of communication become all the more important. In meetings with county welfare directors and stakeholders, some of you have expressed a desire to have more of an ongoing, proactive dialogue on issues and proposals that impact our programs and those whom we serve. Not just through the issuance of final instructions, but through more substantive communication of issues or initiatives as they

develop and for which your input is critical.

It is in this spirit that the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is launching the first edition of a partner newsletter. The sole intention of this effort is to alert you to various activities currently in the planning phase at the state level that may impact work going on at the county level. The newsletter will also highlight ongoing opportunities for counties and stakeholders to provide their input as these state activities are launched or evolve.

I wholeheartedly believe that one of the strengths of our state system is the diversity contained within our state-supervised, county-administered system. When it comes to the administration of our health and human services programs, we do not have a one-size-fits-

all approach to how we organize ourselves in the delivery of the vital services we all provide. Knowing this, I want to extend my sincere appreciation for the work that you do every day. My hope is that this newsletter will keep you informed of all the major issues we are grappling with, and provide you with information on whom to contact at the state level for additional information or to provide input. Of course, feel free to call me anytime if you would like to discuss them further.



We've selected a number of highlights from various CDSS divisions. Their work - and that of other divisions - will be featured in upcoming issues of the Newsletter.

In this inaugural issue, you will see some background on state staff so you can recognize them. Please know they are here to help.

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About Director John Wagner

John A. Wagner was appointed Director of the California Department of Social Services by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in April 2007.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Emergency Contingency Fund (ECF)

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has been aggressive in efforts to draw down available American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding. Recently, CDSS submitted an application to the federal government for funding for short-term, one-time benefits for low-income Californians – called Non-Recurrent Short-Term Benefits. The funding is intended to help low-income Californians overcome a specific crisis situation or to address a specific episode of need. The application was approved by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) on April 7 for a total of approximately \$110 million from October 2008 through March 2010. CDSS estimates that total Non-Recurrent funding through September 2010 should approach approximately \$240 million.

These benefits are not intended to meet ongoing needs, and will not extend beyond four months. There is a wide array of benefits that can be offered under this program, which is a major factor in the slower ramping up of this TANF ECF component. The benefits include diversion payments, which are cash or non-cash payments or services to a CalWORKs applicant, with the intent of diverting the applicant from long-term aid.

The benefits also include:

- Housing assistance such as housing relocation costs, moving assistance, security deposits and move-in costs, short-term rental assistance, emergency shelter, and assistance to prevent eviction.
- Utility vouchers provided for up to four months to pay utilities, such as one-time winter and/or summer allowance to prevent utility shut off.
- Emergency food benefits provided through extra visits to the food bank or extra bags of groceries.
- One-time store vouchers, winter clothing allowances, and school vouchers (for clothing, supplies, backpacks, and other needed student items).
- Employment support to cover work related costs such as uniforms, tools, boots, dues, personal computers, or car repairs required to look for or obtain employment.
- Crisis counseling services not to exceed four months to prevent abuse or neglect, to mentor specific parenting or behavioral skills to facilitate successful family reunification, purchases of items to prepare a home for the child's safe

return, home trial visits, or short term integrated case management services.

In addition to the items listed above, CDSS is in discussions on potential opportunities in the area of expanding summer food programs, providing summer employment programs for youth, and paying for child support arrearages.

Program guidance is targeted for release in April 2010. At this time, TANF ECF funding is time-limited and all expenditures must be incurred by September 30, 2010.

The final application due date for submittal to ACF is September 1, 2010.

The Schwarzenegger Administration has requested an extension of these ARRA funded benefits beyond the September 1 end date.

For more information, please contact Kären Dickerson at (916) 657-2128 or Kären.Dickerson@dss.ca.gov.

About Charr Lee Metsker, Welfare to Work Division

Charr Lee Metsker has worked for CDSS for more than 30 years and is currently the Deputy Director of the Welfare to Work Division, responsible for ongoing oversight of the CalWORKs, Child Care, Refugee, Food Stamp, Program Integrity Programs, and associated Automation Systems. She has more than 20 years of experience in implementing and overseeing employment programs. She

was involved in the implementation of the Greater Avenues for Independence Program in 1986 and participated in development of reforms created by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 that created the CalWORKs Program.

Ms. Metsker holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and a

Master's degree in Public Policy and Administration.



Group Homes Awarded Rate Increases In Accordance with California Necessities Index

On February 23, 2010, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit issued a court order in the case of the California Alliance of Child and Family Services v. Cliff Allenby, et.al. The District Court ordered the California Department of Social Services to adjust the Group Home (GH) rates paid under the California's Rate Classification Level (RCL) system to reflect the California Necessities Index (CNI) increases from 1990-91 through 2009-10. The cumulative increases for that period was determined by the Court to be 76.25 percent to be effective immediately and retroactive to December 14, 2009.

California's rate-setting system for GHs has been in effect since 1990-91 when it was established by the

enactment of Senate Bill 370 and implemented on July 1, 1990. All GH programs are placed into one of 14 rate classification levels using a point system designed to reflect the level of care and services provided to children in care. The RCL point system measures each program's staff-to-child ratio, weighed by the experience, education, training, and professional qualifications of the child care and social work staff. All GHs in the same RCL are paid the same standard rate. The standard rates were originally based on the average of the actual allowable and reasonable costs for programs classified at each RCL to be adjusted annually by the CNI. However, CNI increases are granted by the legislature subject to the availability of funds. There have been no CNI increases for a number of

years.

An appeal of the District Court's decision is pending. However, the court ordered payments due to the GHs effective immediately and retroactive to December 14, 2009. The estimated annual increase in costs as a result of the court ordered increase in the GH rates for Fiscal Year 2010/11 is \$225 million of which \$62 million is Federal, \$65 million is State and \$98 million is county funds.

CDSS is also defending another case involving GH rates. In California Alliance of Children and Family Services v. John Wagner and Gregory Rose ("Alliance II"), the Alliance challenged a 10% GH rate reduction intended to take effect on October 1, 2009. This case is still pending.

About Greg Rose, Children and Family Services Division

Greg Rose is the Deputy Director of the Children and Family Services Division.

Greg joined CDSS in 1995 and his assignments have spanned a range of responsibilities including Chief of the Resources Development and Training Support Bureau, Chief of the Office of Child Abuse Prevention, and the Assistant Deputy Director, Children and Family Services Division.

Prior to his state service, Greg held casework and managerial positions with non-profit organizations that served runaway and homeless youth, pregnant and parenting youth and those living with HIV/AIDS. He also worked for a gang diversion program.

Greg graduated with honors from the California State University, Sacramento with a Master's in Social Work and a focus in community

organizing, planning and administration.

Greg brings with him a wealth of experience in human services and in the area of child maltreatment.



Updated Foster Family Home Regulations

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) has released updated Foster Family Home (FFH) regulations which became effective April 3, 2010. Regulations for FFHs had not been updated since 2003.

CDSS extends its gratitude to the diverse workgroup membership which included children's advocates, county child welfare staff, current and former foster youth, foster parents, and foster parent associations, for helping make these updated regulations a reality. Your dedication, passion, and knowledge on behalf of children in foster care are appreciated beyond measure.

CDSS is pleased that many comments of the Children's Residential Regulations Review Workgroup and key aspects of recent legislation are now addressed in the California Code of Regulations Division 6, Chapter 9.5 governing Foster Family

Homes. Some highlights of the updated regulations to further normalize the lives of children in foster care include:

- Children are permitted to have age and developmentally appropriate access to cash resources, personal hygiene products, kitchen knives, appliances, disinfectants, and cleaning solutions.

- FFH capacity shall be a total of six children or, to accommodate sibling groups, a total of eight children. Capacity will now include adoptive, biological, and guardianship children in the home. Waivers or exceptions are permitted for caregivers who may be able to care for more children.

- Caregivers are required to provide children with transportation to medical appointments, school, and activities unless otherwise arranged.

- Caregivers must use the Reasonable and Prudent

Parent Standard as directed in the regulations when arranging other care for children or allowing children to participate in activities in or outside the home.

- Caregivers are permitted to arrange for occasional short-term babysitters, alternative caregivers, respite care, leaving children alone without adult supervision if age appropriate, licensed child care, and participation in activities.

- A Pre-Placement Questionnaire must be completed if caregivers don't receive critical information and required documents when children are placed with them.

- Caregivers are permitted to provide emergency medical assistance, injections, and medications under specified conditions.

The updated FFH regulations are on the CDSS Office of Regulations Development website at <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/ord/PG1914.htm>.

About Jeff Hiratsuka, Community Care Licensing Division

Mr. Hiratsuka is the Deputy Director of the Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD).

Prior to his appointment as the Deputy Director, Mr. Hiratsuka was the Chief of the Central Operations Branch for CCLD and the Assistant

Deputy Director. He has been with CCLD since October 2001.

His background includes more than 36 years of experience in state government. Previously, Mr. Hiratsuka has managed organizations in the areas of

accounting, financial systems and technology.



In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Anti-Fraud Reforms and CMIPS II Update

The 2009-10 California State Budget mandated major reforms to the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program to address fraud and abuse in the program. Several of these anti-fraud reforms required aggressive time frames which allowed for an abbreviated stakeholder process. Additional stakeholder meetings are being conducted and input sought as CDSS Adult Programs continues to implement program changes, address county policy and implement questions. The following are highlights of the main reforms.

Provider Enrollment Requirements

There are three IHSS Provider requirements for both prospective and current providers:

- Complete and sign under penalty of perjury an enrollment form, submit the form to the county in person and present original documentation verifying his/her identity for photocopying by the county.
- Attend provider orientation and submit a signed provider agreement.
- Have fingerprint and background checks completed (see All-County Letter (ACL) [09-70](#) "Q&A Re: Criminal Background Checks.")

More information coming soon in

an All-County Letter (ACL) titled, "Q&A Re: the New IHSS Provider Enrollment Requirement." Look for it for it at the following address: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/agedblinddisabled/PG2128.htm>.

Provider Enrollment forms/information can be found at: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/agedblinddisabled/PG2083.htm>

How is your county doing enrolling these providers? See the County Enrollment Counts at: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/agedblinddisabled/PG2060.htm>

Court Decision in February Limits Provider Ineligibility to 3 Crimes

Based on a ruling by the Alameda County Superior Court in the Beckwith, et al. v. Wagner court case, crimes that make an individual ineligible to be an IHSS provider are limited to a conviction (misdemeanor or felony) within the last 10 years for the following three crimes (WIC 12305.81):

- Fraud against a governmental health care or supportive services program.
- Abuse of a child.
- Abuse of an elder or dependent adult.

Recipient Fingerprinting

WIC 12305.73 requires that

starting April 1, 2010, IHSS recipients be fingerprinted during assessments/reassessments.

In April, volunteer IHSS recipients in Sacramento and San Diego will be asked to participate in the fingerprint imaging process to test the new mobile fingerprint imaging devices. Information gathered from this pilot phase will help CDSS determine which device meets the needs of the IHSS population and help in the development of fingerprint imaging protocols and exemptions to be shared with counties and other stakeholders.

The State Office of Systems Integration (OSI) Statewide Fingerprint Imaging System (SFIS) will be contacting your county soon to begin scheduling IHSS office site assessments to establish best locations for the networked workstations for this new system.

CMIPS II

CMIPS II is moving toward pilot implementation in three counties – Merced, San Diego and Yolo - in September 2010. The next step, User Acceptance Testing, will begin in May 2010. This effort has included hundreds of state and county staff who have participated in the workgroups that designed CMIPS II. We will keep you updated as we move toward implementation.

About Eva Lopez, Adult Programs Division

Eva L. Lopez is the Deputy Director of the Adult Programs Division and most recently was promoted to Deputy Director of the Disability Determination Services Division.

She has provided leadership in the management, development and implementation of policies and procedures that assist the elderly and the disabled population. In her more than 28 years of

experience in social services programs, she has spent the last 15 years actively involved in the management of policy ... (continued on next page)

About Eva Lopez, continued...

and administrative aspects of programs that serve, aid and protect needy and vulnerable children and adults in California. She has established good working relationships through open lines of communication with key State Stakeholders when implementing policies affecting California's social services population.

Through constant and effective communication, she has also been successful in establishing a strong working relationship with stakeholders such as advocates, employee

unions representing more than 380,000 In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) providers, County Welfare Director's Association, and county welfare departments.

In addition to her experience in Adult Programs, she has worked in the Administration Division within CDSS. This experience enabled her to obtain valuable knowledge in the legislative and budgetary processes at the state and federal level.



ARRA-Funded Modernization Projects

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) made available approximately \$22 million for California over a 2-year period (FFY 2009 and FFY 2010) for food stamp administration. Because of the time constraints for spending the ARRA funds and the desire by counties to include additional programs in certain modernization projects, CDSS was able to use the ARRA funds in a way that extended the time frames for spending the money and drew down federal matching funds for the

other benefitting programs.

As a result, all three Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS) consortia systems will be able to enhance, expand, or implement a web-based online application system for food stamps, CalWORKs and Medi-Cal that is fully integrated into the SAWS systems. In addition, two of the consortia (C-IV and CalWIN) will enhance or implement an Interactive Voice Response (IVR)

system, while Los Angeles will implement a document imaging system. These modernization projects will increase program access for clients and increase county efficiency.

For more information, please contact Kären Dickerson at (916) 657-2128 or Kären.Dickerson@dss.ca.gov.

IV-E Waiver Extension

California began implementing the Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Project in Alameda and Los Angeles Counties on July 1, 2007. Known as the Capped Allocation Project (CAP), it allows flexibility in the use of federal Title IV-E funds and state AFDC-FC funds to be used for service delivery and improvement of child welfare systems and probation departments. The CAP has permitted the child welfare and probation systems in Alameda and Los Angeles Counties to develop and implement alternative or enhanced services to affect better outcomes for children and families. The CAP is due to sunset June 30, 2012.

As both counties embark on their third year of implementation, they are beginning to realize improved results for children and families within their communities. Alameda and Los Angeles Counties have conveyed that their staff are able to see the benefit of retaining funding and generating savings rather than losing funding when children leave care. With these promising changes, CDSS, in conjunction with the California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership, has established a workgroup to focus on Federal Financing Reform. The Co-Investment

Partnership is a collaborative group of state agencies, foundations and other nonprofit organizations whose purpose is improving the lives of children and families who are in or are at risk of entering the state's child welfare system. They work to ensure a coordinated, collaborative approach to the investments needed to improve the child welfare outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being.

Partner organizations and representatives include: CDSS, the Administrative Office of the Courts, County Welfare Directors Association of California, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Casey Family Programs, Stuart Foundation, Walter S. Johnson Foundation, and Zellerbach Family Foundation. The workgroup has had two initial meetings to discuss a strategic approach to support and develop a proposal for a multi-year extension for the current waiver counties.

The earliest targeted date for CDSS to submit a request to the Secretary of Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the fall of 2010. An extension of the CAP potentially can be vital to continuing preventative and supportive child welfare and probation programs that support the safety, permanency and well-being of

children. CDSS, the waiver counties and stakeholders concur that the lessons learned from the CAP will certainly inform State and national efforts on federal financing reform for child welfare.

The original waiver allows for up to 20 counties to participate. CDSS is working with the federal Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families to clarify current federal authority to potentially extend the waiver in California.

Additional counties interested in exploring participation in the CAP during the extension phase may contact Linné Stout, Chief, Child Protection and Family Support Branch or Cheryl Treadwell, Chief, Resource Development & Training Support Bureau at 916-651-6600.

For a copy of the report, please visit our Web site: www.childsworld.ca.gov/PG1333.htm.

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